**Introductory Development Station**

****The introductory paragraph is the beginning of your paper and should answer the following three questions for your reader:

1. *What is this?*
2. *Why am I reading it?*
3. *What do you want me to do?*

In other words, you need to provide some general information about the main idea, explain the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support. It’s also important to communicate to the reader why this topic is important and why he or she should keep reading. Finally, you need to include the thesis, which is the whole point of the paper.

**STEP ONE: Read the following and take notes.**

**Introductions to Avoid**

1. **Clichés**: Dead expressions will lose the audience. Such as: “Since the beginning of time . . . Man has always wondered . . . The devil is in the details . . . The survival of the fittest”
2. **The Definition of a Well-Known Word**: Some writers love defining words in the introduction that everybody over the age of three knows. Don’t do it!
3. **The Announcement Introduction**: In this description of an announcement introduction, I’m giving you an example of an announcement introduction; then I’m going to tell you how annoying the announcement introduction is and how nobody will continue reading because you just told them what they need to know.
4. **The Space Alien / Future Archaeologist / Time Traveler Introduction**: If a future archeologist looked at this reason he would ask himself why on Earth am I so popular. This introduction type is a subset of the cliché.
5. **The “In Common” Introduction**: *What do Oprah Winfrey, Rosie O’Donnell, Elizabeth Taylor and my mailman Bob have in common? They’ve all fallen victim to one of the ten biggest fitness mistakes.* Be sure to read the previous in an annoying announcer voice.

**The Purpose of the Introduction: Bridges to Thesis Statements**

As you’re writing your introduction and leading up to your thesis statement, it is important to LEAD UP TO YOUR THESIS STATEMENT. You must keep your thesis in mind as you write, and you must provide a “bridge” to it.

Hook

Bridge

Thesis

For example, you don’t want to write a nice anecdote about relaxing in your recliner while you enjoy a can of diet Coke and a rerun of Star Trek and then abruptly write, “My recliner is my favorite piece of furniture.”

To keep your essay flowing smoothly, you need a phrase or sentence that segues between your introduction and thesis. It can be as easy as writing, “As I enjoy my afternoons in my recliner, I am reminded that it is my favorite piece of furniture.”

**STEP TWO: Read the following two introductions. Can you identify which one has a bridge that leads to the thesis and which one doesn’t?**

For a student to achieve academically, he or she needs more exposure to learning than what school provides. Parents must be ready to help their children with reading, writing and math skills in the home.

For a student to achieve academically, he or she needs more exposure to learning than what school provides. By creating an environment in the home that is conducive to learning, parents can enhance the likelihood of their children’s academic success. Home exposure to challenging educational opportunities can even compensate for poor schooling, although the highest academic achievement is possible when both home and school contribute to learning. Because parents may have limited control concerning classroom instruction, they must be ready to help their children with reading, writing and math skills in the home.

Thesis: A BOLD statement of the main idea.

Hook: an attention-grabbing sentence that entices the reader to continue reading. “Hooks” the reader into the topic and the essay.

Bridge: A group of sentences that smoothly shift the focus of the writing from the hook to the thesis. An effective bridge is perhaps the trickiest component of an engaging introduction, as there is not one clear way to accomplish this task.

**STEP THREE: Watch this video** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPkwnf_PheM>

**STEP FOUR: Once you have been to the Hook and Thesis Stations, create your introduction.**